

Message Text

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43

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-10 ADP-00 DPW-01 IO-12 AID-20 CCO-00

SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03 NSC-10

PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 RSR-01 /136 W

----- 012700

O R 241045 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3237

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMCONSUL UDORN

USDEL FRANCE

USIA WASHDC

SECDEF

DIRNSA FT GG MEADE MD

CINCPAC

CINCUSARPAC HAWAII

CDRUSMACV

COMUSMACTHAI

CEPCHJUSMAGTHAI

CDR/ USSAG NKP

DEPCDR 7/13 AF

CDR 7 TH RRFS RAMASUN THAI

CDR 7 ACCS KORAT

DODSPECREP BANGKOK

DODSPECREP NKP

CHSPECACTS BKK

56 SOW NKP

432 TRW UDORN

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CDR JCRC NKP

ARMA/ AIRA VTN LAOS

ARMA/ AIRA SVK LAOS

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 2192

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, PINS, PINT, PFOR, LA

SUBJECT: LAO SITUATION REPORT - MARCH 24

CINCPAC FOR POLAD; MACV FOR COMMAND CENTER AND J3 08;
7/13 AF, 432 TRW AND 56 SOW FOR DO/ DI; MACTHAI FOR J2 AND
PAO.

REF: VIENTIANE 2153

SUMMARY: MILITARY-- GROUND ACTION REMAINED LOW DURING PERIOD 22-23
MARCH, WITH ONLY 10 MINOR (AND NO MAJOR) INCIDENTS RE-
PORTED. MULTIPLE SMALL CLASHES CONTINUED IN AREA OF CON-
TESTED VILLAGES NORTHEAST OF KHONG SEDONE. RLAF FLEW 15
T-28 AND FOUR AC-47 SORTIES, ALL DURING TROOPS- IN- CONTACT
SITUATIONS. REPORTED ARTILLERY EXPENDITURES DROPPED TO
ZERO ON 20 AND 21 MARCH. POLITICAL-- LAO NEGOTIATIONS REMAIN
AT STANDSTILL; MILITARY RESEARCH GROUP MEETING CANCELLED.
PRIMIN, IN ARMY DAY REMARKS, URGED NATIONAL UNITY FOR COMING
ELECTORAL STRUGGLE AGAINST LPF AND WARNED MILITARY
AGAINST POSSIBLE ATTEMPTS TO " UPSET THE ESTABLISHED ORDER."
AMERICAN JOURNALISTS ARRIVE VIENTIANE TO ARRANGE FOR COVERAGE
OF EXPECTED PW RELEASE IN HANOI. END SUMMARY.

1. SECTION I- CEASEFIRE OBSERVANCE

A. MR I: NO GROUND OR AIR ACTIVITY REPORTED.

B. MR II: THERE WERE THREE MINOR INCIDENTS, ALL ON 23
MARCH: TWO VERY LIGHT SHELLINGS OF BOUAM LONG, NORTH OF
PDJ (NO CASUALTIES); PATROL CLASH NORTHWEST OF MUONG SOUI
(ONE FRIENDLY MIA). RLAF FLEW NO SORTIES.

C. MR III: FURTHER UPDATE OF SHELLING NORTHEAST OF
DONG HENE INDICATED THAT MAJOR INCIDENT OCCURRED DURING
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NIGHT 21-22 MARCH (211000 Z-2300 Z), WHEN ENEMY FIRED ESTI-
MATED 300 MORTAR/ RECOILLESS RIFLE ROUNDS AT POSITION NEAR
WD 354616; FRIENDS WITHDREW WITH NO CASUALTIES. ONLY
OTHER GROUND ACTION WAS MINOR FRIENDLY ATTACK BY FIRE
AGAINST " SIGHTED ENEMY MOVEMENT" APPROX 40 KM SOUTH OF
THAKHEK ON 23 MARCH. (COMMENT: RECENT HEAVY ARTILLERY
EXPENDITURES IN AREA SOUTH OF THAKHEK ARE APPARENTLY PART
OF SEARCH AND CLEAR OPERATION WHEREIN FRIENDS RECONNOITER
BY FIRE AS THEY MOVE. ONE RESULT REPORTED HAS BEEN THE

DESTRUCTION OF TWO VILLAGES, ALTHOUGH THE INHABITANTS REPORTEDLY FLED TO THAILAND AND ARE ONLY NOW BEGINNING TO RETURN.) RLAF FLEW EIGHT T-28 SORTIES ON 23 MARCH, ALL IN SUPPORT OF THAKHEK TROOPS IN CONTACT OR AGAINST ENEMY FIRING POSITIONS NORTH OF DONG HENE, AS WELL AS TWO AC-47 SORTIES PREVIOUS NIGHT IN SUPPORT OF TROOPS IN CONTACT IN KENGKOK AND DONG HENE AREAS. OVER 140 VILLAGERS FROM AREA APPROX 25 KM NORTH OF MUONG PHALANE LEFT WHAT THEY TERMED OPPRESSIVE ENEMY CONTROL (STIFF RICE COLLECTION AND DRAFT POLICIES) AND WALKED INTO FRIENDLY POSITION TO REQUEST RESETTLEMENT IN RLG AREA.

D. MR IV: IN CONTINUATION OF ACTION APPROX 35 KM NORTHEAST OF KHONG SEDONE (REFTEL), THREERE WERE FOUR MINOR CLASHES 21-23 MARCH WITH TOTAL RESULTS OF ONE FRIENDLY KIA, FOUR WIA, TWO MIA PLUS TWO ENEMY KIA AND ESTIMATED TEN OTHER ENEMY CASUALTIES. ELSEWHERE, THERE WERE TWO MINOR CLASHES WELL NORTHWEST OF KHONG SEDONE AND WELL SOUTHEAST OF SOUKHOUMA ON 23 MARCH (THREE FRIENDLY WIA). RLAF FLEW SEVEN T-28 SORTIES ON 23 MARCH AND TWO AC-47 SORTIES PREVIOUS NIGHT, ALL IN SUPPORT OF KHONG SEDONE AREA TROOPS IN CONTACT.

E. MR V: NO GROUND OR AIR ACTION REPORTED.

F. COUNT OF CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS: RLG DEFMIN ANNOUNCED ELEVEN ADDITIONAL ENEMY VIOLATIONS, BRINGING TOTAL TO 286 AS OF MORNING 21 MARCH. (OUR COUNT OF GROUND ACTIONS INITIATED BY BOTH SIDES SHOWS 66 MAJOR AND 373 MINOR INCIDENTS THROUGH 20 MARCH.)

2. SECTION II - POLITICAL SITUATION

A. LAO NEGOTIATIONS AT A STANDSTILL. ONE DAY PAST THE
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VIENTIANE AGREEMENT'S MARCH 23 DEADLINE FOR FORMATION OF THE NEW PGNU, BOTH POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS ON FORMING A NEW PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT AND MILITARY NEGOTIATIONS ON DRAFT PROTOCOLS TO IMPLEMENT THE AGREEMENT ARE AT A STANDSTILL. THE MILITARY RESEARCH GROUP MEETING SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 24 WAS CANCELLED AT REQUEST OF LPF REPRESENTATIVE SOTH PHETRASY WHO EXPLAINED THAT THE LPF WAS NOT YET PREPARED TO PRESENT ITS DRAFT MILITARY PROTOCOL. SOTH SAID THAT HE HOPES TO HAVE A DRAFT READY BY MARCH 26; BUT NO NEW MEETING HAS YET BEEN SCHEDULED. THERE ARE NO FIRM INDICATIONS WHEN ANY LPF NEGOTIATOR WILL RETURN FROM SAM NEUA. TODAY'S WEEKLY AEROFLOT FLIGHT FROM HANOI CARRIED NO LPF REPRESENTATIVE.

B. PRIMIN URGES UNITY, WARNS AGAINST COUP ATTEMPTS.
PRIM, SPEAKING TO RANKING FAR OFFICERS AT ARMY DAY

CEREMONY AT MINISTRY NATIONAL DEFENSE MARCH 23, URGED MILITARY TO BE VIGILANT IN DEFENDING NATIONAL TERRITORY AND PUBLIC ORDER BUT WARNED AGAINST POSSIBLE ATTEMPTS TO "UPSET THE ESTABLISHED ORDER" WHICH, HE SAID, COULD ONLY CAST LAOS INTO THE ABYSS OF MISERY AND RUIN. ACCORDING OFFICIAL LAO PRESS ACCOUNT, PRIMIN DECLARED TO OFFICERS THAT HE ASSUMES PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR VIENTIANE AGREEMENT WHICH WAS NECESSARY TO BRING PEACE TO LAOS AT A TIME WHEN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS WERE FAVORABLE. PRIMIN EXPLAINED HIS VIEW THAT U. S. WAS CARRYING OUT A POLICY OF DISENGAGEMENT FROM INDOCHINA AND, THEREFORE, LAO MILITARY LEADERS OUGHT TO UNDERSTAND THE NEED TO MOVE FROM ARMED STRUGGLE TO POLITICAL STRUGGLE. NOW, THE PRIMIN ASSERTED, THE STAKES ARE IN THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTIONS AND ALL ELEMENTS DEDICATED TO LIBERTY OUGHT TO UNITE IN THE ELECTORAL STRUGGLE AGAINST THE LPF.

C. JOURNALISTS ARRIVING VIENTIANE HOPING TO COVER POW RELEASE IN HANOI. MAY PROMINENT AMERICAN JOURNALISTS USUALLY WORKING OUT OF SAIGON ARE ARRIVING IN VIENTIANE, PROMPTED BY MARCH 23 ASSURANCE OF DRV MEMBER TO FPJMC THAT THEY WOULD BE PERMITTED TO COVER FINAL POW RELEASE IN HANOI. DRV EMBASSY IN VIENTIANE HAS NOT YET ISSUED VISAS TO ANY OF THE JOURNALISTS. WALTER CRONKITE WHO HAD PLANNED TO FLY TO HANOI ON MARCH 24 AEROFLOT FLIGHT INFORMED EMBASSY THAT DRV DECLINED TO ISSUE HIM A VISA BECAUSE POW
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RELEASE WOULD NOT OCCUR OVER WEEKEND AS PREVIOUSLY SCHEDULED.
GODLEY

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